

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

CLAIMS WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (Currently Amended) A messaging platform including:
 - a) a message store arranged to receive message data and to store said message data for subsequent retrieval;
characterised by
 - b) a control interface arranged to control communication of control signals between the messaging platform and a plurality of service providers; and
 - c) an overload controller responsive to an overload condition of said control interface in the platform and arranged, in response to the said overload condition, to limit loading of the control interface platform.
2. (Currently Amended) A messaging platform ~~according to~~ as in claim 1, further comprising wherein:
 - e) asaid control interface is arranged to receive control requests instructing transactions on the messaging platform, and ~~in which~~
the overload controller includes means for denying at least some of the control requests in response to the overload condition.
3. (Currently Amended) A platform ~~according to~~ as in claim 2, in which:

the overload controller is programmed with criteria for applying different classes of service to control requests received at the control interface, and

the overload controller is arranged, in response to an overload condition on the platform, selectively to deny control requests depending on a class of service assigned in accordance with the said criteria to the control request.

4. (Currently Amended) A platform ~~according to~~ as in claim 3, in which the criteria apply a class of service selected depending on the identity of a service provider originating the said control requests.

5. (Currently Amended) A platform ~~according to~~ as in claim 3 in which the criteria apply a class of service selected depending on the identity of a subscriber mailbox to which the control request applies.

6. (Currently Amended) A platform ~~according to~~ as in claim 3, in which the criteria apply different service classes depending on the transaction requested by the control request.

7. (Currently Amended) A message system comprising:
a service platform running a message service application; and
a messaging platform ~~according to~~ as in claim 1 connected to the service platform via ~~a~~ said control interface, and arranged to receive control requests from the service platform via the control interface, and arranged to receive control requests from the service platform via the control interface.

8. (Currently Amended) A messaging system ~~according to~~ as in claim 7, in which the service platform is remote from the messaging platform.

9. (Previously Amended) A communications network including a messaging platform according to claim 1.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a messaging platform including:

a) storing message data on the messaging platform via a control interface arranged to control communication of control signals between the messaging platform and a plurality of service providers; and

b) subsequently outputting message data from the platform via said control interface, thereby allowing retrieval of a corresponding message; and
characterized by

c) detecting an overload condition on the ~~platform~~ control interface and in response to the overload condition limiting loading of the ~~platform~~ control interface.

11. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to~~ as in claim 10, further comprising:

d) receiving at the ~~message platform~~ control interface control requests instructing a transaction on the messaging platform,

and in which the step of limiting loading of the ~~platform~~ control interface includes denying at least some of the control requests.

12. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to~~ as in claim 11, including applying different classes of service to the control requests, and in response to the overload condition

selectively denying some only of the control requests depending on the class of service applied to the control requests.

13. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to~~ as in claim 12, including applying different classes of service to control requests depending on the identity of an originating service provider.

14. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to~~ as in claim 12, including applying different classes of service to control requests depending on identities of customer mailboxes to which the control requests apply.

15. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to~~ as in claim 12, including applying different classes of service to control requests depending on the transaction requested by the control request.

16. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to~~ as in claim 15, in which the messaging platform includes a plurality of mailboxes containing message data, each mailbox being switchable between an open state, in which message data may be written to or read from the mailbox, and a closed state, and in which the step of limiting loading includes allowing requests for the closing of a mailbox and denying requests for the opening of a mailbox.

17. (Previously Presented) A communications network including a messaging system as in claim 7.